

Superiority essential in air and space

(Editor's note: This is part of a series on the Air Force's core values and competencies.)

WASHINGTON (AFNS) – The Air Force is committed to complete integration of air and space. That vision is reflected in the core competency of “air and space superiority” that the Air Force’s senior leadership recently defined.

Core competencies represent capabilities the Air Force brings to the nation to support the national military strategy and are part of the Air Force’s new strategic vision, “Global Engagement: A Vision for the 21st Century Air Force.”

The other Air Force core competencies are global attack, rapid global mobility, precision engagement, information superiority and agile combat support.

Air and space superiority combines two core competencies from the Air Force’s earlier strategic vision, “Global Reach, Global Power.” The air and space link is now even stronger in Global Engagement.

“Air and space superiority prevents adversaries from interfering with operations of air, space or surface forces and assures freedom of action and movement,” said Sheila E. Widnall, Secretary of the Air Force. “The

control of air and space is a critical enabler for the joint force because it allows all U.S. forces freedom from attack and freedom to attack.

“With air and space superiority, the joint force can dominate enemy operations in all dimensions: land, sea, air and space.”

Gen. Ronald R. Fogleman, Air Force Chief of Staff, noted that while air and space superiority is lethal against enemy forces, it saves American lives.

That view was echoed as recently as last fall when the Air Force received a letter from a man whose brother served as a Marine during Desert Storm in 1991.

“I believed at that time and continue to believe that the greatest threat to (my brother’s) safety was from air attack,” said Brit Ferguson of Stephenville, Texas.

“This danger never materialized,” he continued, “and he came home safely because of the absolutely outstanding job that the U.S. Air Force did in rapidly gaining and then maintaining overwhelming air supremacy.”

This core competency from the “Global Reach, Global Power” strategic vision, now modified to include space, fits comfortably into Global Engagement.

“Gaining air and space superiority is not just operationally important,” Fogleman said,

“it is also a strategic imperative for protecting American lives throughout a crisis or conflict. It is the precursor for dominant maneuver and the basis of full-dimensional protection.”

Strategic attack and interdiction, Fogleman said, are “crucial to the outcome of any battle. They’re not possible without air superiority. Effective surface maneuver is impossible without it. And so is efficient logistics.

“The bottom line is that everything on the battle-

field is at risk without air and space superiority. Moreover, if air dominance is achieved and joint forces can operate with impunity throughout the adversary’s battle space, the joint force commander will prevail quickly, efficiently and decisively.”

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**Brit Ferguson
Marine’s brother**

Secretary denounces sexual harassment

WASHINGTON (AFNS) – Testifying before Congress, the secretary of the Air Force has come out strongly against sexual harassment in the military.

Secretary of the Air Force Sheila E. Widnall spoke Feb. 4 before the Senate Armed Services Committee. Right from the start, she spoke about how the Air Force approaches sexual harassment.

“The Air Force is absolutely committed to creating an environment in which all our people, whatever their gender or race or ethnic origin, can work free of harassment or discrimination,” Widnall said. “It is their right.”

Widnall went on to say that within the military, there is a second, equally important consideration – the need to build cohesion and a sense of community in the Air Force.

“Nothing destroys military effectiveness more quickly or effectively than division in the ranks,” Widnall said. “The success of missions depends in large measure on the degree of trust and understanding that exists among the people in our units.

“Anything that might erode that trust is just not tolerable, so the ‘zero tolerance’

policy toward discrimination of any kind that the Air Force has maintained for years is a logical and necessary measure.”

The secretary told the senators how the Air Force has taken steps toward an effective program. This includes combating the threat of sexual harassment, emphasizing commander’s responsibility and personal accountability, articulating core values and revising the policy of fraternization.

“We expect our commanders at all levels to create an organizational culture where members are valued,” she said. “We also expect them to make their commitment clear to those in their command and to take action when violations occur.”

The secretary said that while the Air Force is not immune from sexual harassment, how an organization responds to incidents is paramount. She said Air Force leaders are equipped to handling sexual harassment issues.

People who want to report sexual harassment problems can call social actions at Ext. 5148 or the Air Force’s hotline at 1-800-558-1404. This is not a free call from the United Kingdom.

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Editorial content is edited, prepared and provided by the public affairs office of the 48th Fighter Wing. All photos are Air Force photos unless otherwise indicated.

The deadline for submissions to the “Jet 48” is noon Friday, the week prior to publication. For weekend events, the deadline is noon the Monday prior to publication, provided the editor is notified in advance. The public affairs office reserves the right to edit all material submitted for publication. Contact the editor in Bldg. 1085, call Ext. 5640, e-mail Jet_48@48fw.lakenheath.af.mil or fax Ext. 5637.

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